

# Kentucky Literacy Link

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We invite your questions **and your contributions of ideas/lessons that work**. E-mail those to [rebecca.woosley@education.ky.gov](mailto:rebecca.woosley@education.ky.gov), and they could be included in this **literacy link** to connect teachers across the state by sharing insights, bright ideas and best practices.

## Issues of Interest

### Kentucky Has Reason to Celebrate!

The Kentucky Department of Education issued the following news release on March 24, 2010:

The results of the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading show that Kentucky's 4th and 8th graders made significant gains when compared to the state's performance in previous NAEP assessments.

According to NAEP, Kentucky is one of three states that had a statistically significant increase in 4th-grade

reading scores from 2007 to 2009. Kentucky is also one of nine states that had a statistically significant increase in 8th-grade reading scores from 2007 to 2009. Kentucky is the only state in the nation to report increases in both 4th- and 8th-grade reading scores.

See the full news release at

<http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/HomePageRepository/News+Room/Current+Press+Releases+and+Advisories/10-018.htm>.

## A New Name and a New Link

The instructional resource formerly known as *High Quality Teaching and Learning (HQTL)* has recently been renamed *Highly Effective Teaching and Learning (HETL)*. You can access the HETL resource with the replacement link - <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Highly+Effective+Teaching+and+Learning/> - or you can go to the KDE homepage and select Instructional Resources. When you reach the Instructional Resources page, scroll down and choose *Highly Effective Teaching and Learning* from the list on the left. That will take you to all of the resources that have been developed to support instruction.

## A Call for Work Sample Submissions

### Contributions to EdSteps: Benefits for Students, Teachers, and Parents

EdSteps, an organization led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), is collecting student work to establish a large library of examples in five key skill areas: writing, global competence, creativity, problem solving and analyzing information. The organization is creating a range of samples that will represent student growth in those skill areas.

Parents and students will be able to use the work samples to compare their work to other student samples and assess their skills to determine the next steps for improvement. Teachers also will have access to this tool, which can be used to facilitate teaching and learning.

EdSteps requested and has been granted permission to use the *Kentucky Marker Papers*. In addition, Kentucky teachers also can contribute to EdSteps. Those additional contributions from your students' work will help expand EdSteps' Web-based resource, which has the potential to positively impact student growth and improvement.

For details on how to contribute by submitting student work, visit the EdSteps site:

<http://www.edsteps.org/CCSSO/Home.aspx>

## The Latest About Kentucky's Core Academic Standards

On March 10, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) posted the most recent draft of the English/Language Arts and Mathematics Common Core Standards for public comment and feedback. When the feedback period ends in early April, CCSSO will make final revisions to the standards.

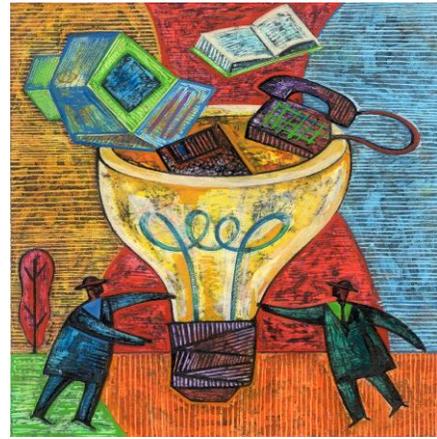
An announcement about the release of the final, revised standards is not expected until later this spring. When that occurs, this newsletter will provide an update and a link.

### Schools and districts are urged not to make final curriculum and instruction decisions based on any early drafts.

Once the final standards are released, KDE will provide crosswalks of the previous standards and the new Kentucky Core Academic Standards (KCAS) for teachers. In addition, teachers will be provided with a professional development network of opportunities to support implementation of the standards.

## Conference in 2010

**Kentucky Reading Association (KRA) Conference** –*Leading for Literacy* is the theme for the 2010 conference. Conference participants will gather at the Lexington Hyatt and Conference Center Oct. 28-30. Mark your calendars and visit <http://www.kyreading.org/Preview.aspx> for a conference preview or to submit a proposal to present. **Proposals are due May 21.**



## 21st-Century Skills

### Developing Students' Media Literacy Skills

Marshall McLuhan is probably best remembered for his statement, "The medium is the message." Many people consider Marshall McLuhan to have shaped 20th-century thinking about technology and communication. McLuhan's point is still relevant for today's students. As technology continues its massive impact on communication, it's clear that his vision and insights stretched into the 21st century as well. Students are bombarded daily with an overwhelming number of media messages that attempt to influence their thinking and their personal, social and political choices and values. To be successful as 21st-century citizens, they will need well-honed media literacy skills. One aspect of the Information, Media and Technology skills identified as outcomes in the Partnership for 21st-Century Skills P21 Framework is Media Literacy.

[http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/P21\\_Framework\\_Definitions.pdf](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/documents/P21_Framework_Definitions.pdf)

Students develop media literacy skills as they use critical thinking to recognize and interpret the techniques used by media and to understand how they are influenced by those techniques. Students exercise and refine their critical thinking skills as they consider the value messages embedded in media communications.

Students are engaged and take ownership of their learning when teachers involve them in inquiry that guides them to identify patterns, describe techniques and collaboratively consider audience, purpose and context in the media examples they examine. In addition, activities surrounding these skills give students a chance to develop their innovative and creative skills, which are also outcomes included in the Partnership for 21st-Century Skills framework.

Lessons built around these goals provide multiple opportunities to develop students' reading, writing, speaking and listening skills as they simultaneously acquire media literacy skills. As you consider these lesson ideas for your students, think about what modifications you and members of your professional learning community can make to create an age-appropriate modification that will engage students as they develop media literacy skills.

An initial strategy teachers can use to guide student inquiry is immersing them in both print and digital advertisements. Through inquiry, students will learn to identify propaganda in advertisements and to question the validity of the claims, making them more media-literate. Provide student teams with some guiding questions to focus their attention and facilitate their thinking. For example:

- What's the message in the advertisement?
- Who is the target audience?
- What does the author of the ad already know about the target audience?
- What did the author of the ad do, say or portray in order to persuade the target audience?
- What are the values suggested in the ad?
- How would you describe the persuasive technique(s) used in the ad?
- Where does the ad appear? If the ad is a TV commercial, when does it appear? If the ad is digital, appearing on the computer or through some other technology device, when does it "pop up" or appear?

As students begin to think about these questions, they usually will name propaganda techniques. To help them capture their observations, compile a list on the board or the overhead projector to keep for reference. Below are only a few common techniques identified and defined in many sources in print and online:

- testimonials
- transfer
- emotional words
- bandwagon
- celebrity endorsement
- convincing facts and figures

Next, it's important for students to understand Aristotle's three categories of appeals that make up the rhetorical triangle:

ethos, pathos and logos. As students analyze the appeals made in advertisements (whatever the medium), help them identify and understand how the authors of the ads used ethos, an ethical appeal based on the credibility of the speaker or author; pathos, an appeal to the emotions; and logos, the appeal to reason.

Giving students some initial examples as models will help them understand these persuasive strategies and apply them accurately. For example, companies and politicians frequently use ethos to convince customers or voters that they are trustworthy and believable. They also quote authorities or provide convincing statistics to support the credibility of their claims. In a similar manner, advertisements use pathos to cause an emotional response. Their goal is to convince a consumer to act either by stimulating a positive or, at times, a negative emotion. For instance, the image of a child who struggles with a disease often will prompt donations to an organization benefiting children suffering from that disease. When advertisements employ logos, they often present straight-forward, fact-based evidence to support their claim and convince their target audience.

Scaffold instruction by allowing students to practice in teams. Ask them to locate ads and identify the appeals first. Then, to build their understanding of the concepts and their confidence, ask them to apply their knowledge independently. When you ask students to apply the skill independently, try sending students on an "ad analysis scavenger hunt" to find at least three ads in each category (Internet ads, TV ads and print ads) that use each of the appeals.

To further engage students' critical thinking skills and their ownership of the content, involve them in designing a graphic organizer to use for the "hunt." Follow up with group and whole-class discussions of their "finds" to deepen and extend their understanding and insights. You can extend the activity and challenge students' higher order thinking by asking them to pinpoint examples in ads where the propaganda techniques manipulated the target audience.

It's important to give students multiple opportunities to talk about media techniques and strategies, to apply their understandings and to interpret the meaning of media messages in many print, TV and online contexts. Ultimately, students need to reflect on how an informed awareness of the techniques and strategies employed in media communications can benefit them.

Provide students (or teams of students) a chance to apply some of the same techniques and strategies they've identified by developing their own persuasive ads or an ad campaign.

This will cause them to think about their purpose and audience, as well as how they can most effectively persuade that target audience. It also will cause them to consider the values of their target audience and the publication context of their ads. Additionally, this activity will give students an opportunity to make intentional decisions about how they apply their innovative and creative skills.

If you want to extend students' learning and deepen their insight, ask them to explain the choices they made in their own ads and critique the effectiveness of ads created by others. Above all, individual students need the opportunity to reflect on what they understand and about what helped them gain that understanding. This vital concluding step in their learning process will give them confidence in what they know, and it also will give you a chance to formatively evaluate their learning.

For more information on Marshall McLuhan, visit

<http://www.regent.edu/acad/schcom/rojc/mdic/mcluhan.html>.



## Turning the Page

### Sharing a Literacy Strategy

#### Graphic Organizers

If you are looking for a literacy/learning tool to guide reading comprehension and logical thinking and to foster growth and improvement in writing at the same time, look no further. Graphic organizers, which are visual learning tools, will meet those needs.

#### **What should be included in an organizer designed to support reading comprehension and help students construct meaning?**

- Identify the target categories of critical ideas and support and include those labels in the organizer.

**OR**

Engage students in identifying the categories – first in collaborative teams and later as a part of a whole class discussion. (Determine which method you will use based on the developmental level of your students.)

- Model for students how to use the organizer when reading. Explain each step (and your own thinking about each step) as you read a section of the text aloud to the class.

- Once students have recorded some information in the categories on the organizer, look over their shoulders (to see who is “getting” it).
- Ask those students to share their initial responses and to explain their rationale. This will help ensure all students “get” it.

Help students see the logical organization of ideas in the text, such as how steps, ideas or arguments and support “fit” together in the text. This strategy will not only support their reading comprehension, but it also will support their growth as writers by informing their understanding of text structure.

#### **In what ways can an organizer further improve students' growth as writers?**

- Set up organizers for them to use to analyze the “parts” of model pieces.
- Use the same organizer as a tool when they are capturing and organizing their ideas and the support for ideas before they draft a piece of writing.
- Use the same organizer again after they have completed their draft. This time, however, ask students to use it to analyze the ideas, support and structure of their own work. (This same tool could be used as a way to capture peer response to the work of other students.)

#### **What about an organizer for analyzing print or digital advertisements?**

Consider:

- including categories of persuasive techniques
- asking students to identify the target audience, the purpose (message to the audience) and the context of the advertisement
- adding a place where students can reflect on and explain why the ad is or is not effective for the target audience (You can extend students' critical thinking by asking them to suggest strategies for improving the ads they critique and defending the value of their suggestions.)

#### **Where can you find graphic organizers?**

There are many places where you can find examples of graphic organizers.

- Textbook series often include hard copies of graphic organizers related to the content area covered.
- Consulting the Web site of the textbook publisher will often yield electronic versions of other organizers.

- There are many books on the market that contain just graphic organizers.
- For a quick, cost-free reference, a multitude of Web sites, many designed by school districts, offer a wealth of sample organizers categorized for a variety of purposes and learning objectives.

While all the sources listed above will provide you excellent resources, and they may serve as credible, helpful models, many of the best organizers are those you design yourself to support your own students' learning in the context of your learning targets.

It's also important to consider that while using organizers is a valuable learning support for students, it is the students' ability to transfer their learning about the purpose of the organizer that is the key to ownership of the learning. Two factors contribute to the transfer. First, it is important for students to understand why they are using the organizer and how it can benefit them to use an organizer on their own in future reading and writing activities. Second, students benefit from the critical thinking process of helping decide on the categories and participating in creating the organizer. This ownership supports their connection to the learning and the likelihood they will also use the strategy in other contexts.

The Kentucky Department of Education's Web site provides a valuable resource where you can view some excellent examples of Kentucky teachers in all content areas using graphic organizers to effectively support learners in their classrooms. *Literacy Without Limits* goes right into the classrooms where Kentucky teachers are actively using graphic organizers, as well as other literacy strategies, with their students. The resource is easy to navigate and logically organized so you can find examples for the grade level you teach. The examples of teachers using organizers as instructional tools at all grade levels demonstrate the effective use of the tool. Those techniques can be easily modified and applied at other grade levels. You can access this resource at <http://www.literacywithoutlimits.org/>.

Reference:

Alvermann, D.E. & Boothby, P. (1986). Children's Transfer of Graphic Organizer Instruction. *Reading Psychology*, .1521-0685, Volume 7, Issue 2.



## Suggested Reading

**Gallagher, K. (2003).** *Reading Reasons: Motivational Mini-Lessons for Middle and High School.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Some secondary students claim they don't read and ask why they need to read. In this book, Gallagher provides insights and proven mini-lessons to help teachers guide students to be able to answer their question and develop their literacy skills.

**Graff, G., Wham, & Birkenstein, C. (2010).** *They Say / I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

A new version of this book, which was mentioned in the last *Literacy Link*, was recently released. Graff and Birkenstein, two of the authors, presented research at a national writing conference validating the efficacy of explicit teaching, specifically, providing students with templates to guide them as they develop the structure of their writing and their thinking. The newest version of their book includes chapters that support both reading and writing. Their chapter titles will give you some insights into their purposes:

- ✓ "What's Motivating the Writer?" – a chapter devoted to reading comprehension and analysis
- ✓ "The Data Suggest" – a chapter devoted to writing in science
- ✓ "Analyze This" – a chapter devoted to writing in social studies

**Overmeyer, M. (2009)** *What Student Writing Teaches Us: Formative Assessment in the Writing Workshop.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Overmeyer provides rationale, sample rubrics and examples of student work in this book that guide teachers of students at all grade levels as they consider how to use formative assessment to empower student writers and guide their growth and improvement. His proven lessons are classroom-tested. In his words, "Assessment, when used correctly in a formative way, can empower students and teachers to not only improve, but better yet, to believe in themselves as writers and teachers of writing."

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Let [your scholar] know nothing because you have told him, but because he has learned it for himself. Let him not be taught science, let him discover it. If ever you substitute authority for reason, he will cease to reason; he will be a mere plaything of other people's thoughts.

- Jean Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher (1712-78)

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### Check out these links ...

[http://www.readwritethink.org/search/index.html?page=1&sort\\_order=relevance&q=persuasion&srchgo.x=0&srchgo.y=0&old\\_q=&srchwhere=full-site](http://www.readwritethink.org/search/index.html?page=1&sort_order=relevance&q=persuasion&srchgo.x=0&srchgo.y=0&old_q=&srchwhere=full-site)

You can find this link by going to the readwritethink.org web site sponsored by NCTE and prompting the search with the key word *persuasion*. That gave me a list of classroom-tested persuasive strategy lessons targeting students at all different grade levels. You may find some ideas to use or to adapt at this site.

<http://www.choiceliteracy.com/>

This site was written and developed by and for literacy leaders, coaches and teachers. While it does require membership to use many of the resources, following this link will allow you to sign up for *The Big Fresh*, a free weekly e-newsletter that focuses on literacy.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/critical-media-literacy-commercial-97.html>

This link will take you to four 45-minute lessons developed by Dr. Laurie Henry (from the University of Kentucky) for middle school students.



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